

**UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS LOWELL
CENTER FOR LOWELL HISTORY
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION**

**SHIFTING GEARS PROJECT
LAWRENCE**

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INTERVIEWER: YILDEREY ERDENER
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**Y = YILDEREY
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SG-LA-T562

Y: You said we shouldn't call it uh, "Bread and Roses".

C: No.

Y: Why not?

C: Because what was so nice about a bad strike?

Y: Do you remember it?

C: Sure I remember. I saw people get hit in the head. The horses, there was policemen on horses and they, with the night sticks and hitting them on the head. And blood and everything. And we were, they come right by Elm Street where we were living. And the people were just marching on the street. And the policemen was trying to break up the march. They come with horses and sticks and hit them on the head. We was screaming. We live on Elm Street. We were looking out the window. My father had to go to the drug store and get medicine for us. I was only about twelve years old then. I was, we all got sick over that. They call it "Bread and Roses".

Y: What should they call it?

C: That was a bad strike, never mind "Bread and Roses".

Y: What should they call it?

C: 1912. What was it? The strike of 1912. That's what it was. It was no "Bread and Roses".

Y: Yeah.

C: "Bread and Roses" sounds like something nice. But it wasn't anything nice. A lot of people didn't have money. You know yourself, a lot of immigrants, they don't have money. There was no social security in them days. If they didn't work they didn't have money. Is that right? So "Bread and Roses", I hate that name! And so do a lot of people. (Y: Yeah) The older people. Why should they give it such a name. It sounds stupid to me, it sounds stupid.

Y: Yeah. Well your father was working at that time?

C: My father, yes. My father was sick a lot, he didn't work too much.

Y: I mean during this strike was he (--)

C: No. No, my father was a sick man.

Y: Yeah. (C: yeah) Who worked? Your mother?

C: My mother never worked. My mother came from Sicily where the women don't work. (Y: Oh, I see) You know? And she (--) Well seven children, where would you go? Leave seven children around?

Y: I mean uh, who provided?

C: Well I had two sisters and one brother that were working at that time. (Y: yeah) Yeah. You don't work you didn't get no money in them days. It's not like now.

Y: So your sis (--) You're talking about that strike? What else do you remember? You were twelve years old?

C: I was quite young then. I think about twelve, or something like that.

Y: Yeah. So you were working at the mills, or you ?

C: No, no. At that time I wasn't working.

Y: You were at home going to school?

C: Yeah, going to school, yeah.

Y: Elementary school? (C: what?) Elementary School?

C: Yeah. (Y: And uh) You didn't go to many grades in them days. Then they put you to work when you were about fourteen.

Y: You know this simple (--) You would say probably that what you told me right now is not

important, but it is important. You know, nobody told me about the strike.

C: About Bread and Roses? (Y: yeah) That name? (Y: Yeah) A lot of people will tell you if you ask them.

Y: Nobody told me. I mean I asked them. What else did you see? But uh (--)

C: No, we didn't go out much, you know? That's all we saw, because it went by our house.

Y: Yeah, Elm Street? (C: Elm Street) E L M?

C: E L M. (Y: Yeah) Way down near Union Street. If you go down you know where it is. Between Newbury Street (Y: yeah) and Union Street. That's Elm Street. Of course Elm Street runs all the way down. But that's where we used to live, between Newbury Street and Union Street. And that piece of Elm Street. And we were living in one of those houses. And they were marching down and the police came on horses. (Y: Yeah) And they broke a lot of heads that day. And that was no Bread and Roses.

Y: What do you mean, broke head. Did they uh (--)

C: They were trying to break up the strike. The marches. (Y: Uh huh) Now they weren't doing anything wrong. They were just marching and singing, all right? (Y: Yeah) And the police came on horses, a big bunch of them, because the Wood Mill, Billy Wood, did not want, they wanted to break up the strike. They didn't want to give them more money. (Y: Yeah) And another thing a lot of people don't know, Mr. Ford, the automobile maker, long time ago when there was still the mills in Lawrence, he wanted to build a place in Lawrence. And Mr. Wood would not let him. I don't know how he done it, but uh, see, because then they would be making more money there and they wouldn't be working in the mills. (Y: Yeah) I remember hearing my father talking about that.

Y: Oh, I never heard about that.

C: Well there's a lot of things you know, you're not from Lawrence.

Y: Well that is right. And uh, so you were a little child looking outside from the window out?

C: Oh sure! You hear all the people. Well see, they were marching and they was singing. So we looked out, you know, you look out the window. My mother, my father, my sister. (Y: Yeah) And the police come running down with the horses and start hitting everybody. And we got all excited. We got sick over it. My father had to go to the drug store and get some medicine for us. It wasn't a nice strike you know. (Y: Yeah) That's why the people that saw what was going on, we do not like that name? I wish you'd tell somebody.

Y: I will. And they say they also killed a girl. Was it an Italian girl?

C: Well I heard about that. I heard about that.

Y: What did you hear? I mean uh (--)

C: I know they killed somebody. At that time I didn't know about it, but I heard about it after.

Y: Right. Uh huh. What did you think as a little child? I mean did you understand what was going on?

C: You don't, you don't think much when you're young, you know? Just what I happen to see that day. But about the strike, you know, we don't, I don't remember that.

Y: I mean at that time did you understand what was going on? (C: No,no) Or your father or mother told you what is the problem?

C: No, they didn't talk about it, no. And I didn't understand. Maybe (--) I don't remember, see?

Y: Yeah. Well that was uh (--)

C: I remember about that, because that was horrible. We remember something like that you know.

Y: Right.

C: When you see people with blood all over them. When I remember about it. And then they say, "Bread and Roses." That makes me made.

Y: Yeah. Um. I'm talking to Mrs. Carolina, what do you (--) Catherina? What is your first name?

C: My name is Catherine.

Y: Yeah, Catherine Simonelli. S I M (--)

C: I M O N E L L I

Y: Yeah. We started talking about 1912 Strike, but actually I would like to ask you first um, your birth place.

C: Italy, Polermo.

Y: Polermo? Oh, Sicily. (C: Polermo) Oh! What year?

C: 1904.

Y: 1904. And uh, you came to the United States?

C: I was sixteen months old.

Y: A little baby?

C: Baby, yeah. (Y: Huh) Baby.

Y: And uh, the whole family came, or uh (--)

C: My father came first. My father came two years before us. About a year and a half. Well a little ways, a few months before us. Nine months, ten months, I don't know. Yeah, and then one year apart they came.

Y: And then he sent money? (C: Who?) Your father.

C: Who remembers? [Laughs]

Y: Yeah, I mean how did you get to the United States you know, all the way from Polermo?

C: On the boat. And my mother used to say on a boat. And it used to take a long time to come on the boat. (Y: Yeah) Yeah.

Y: There are all these stories in the family about how the family arrived in the United States. And some say there were so many difficulties. People died and this kind (--) Do you remember any such stories, family stories your mother, father(--)

C: No, because uh (--) No. We had relatives, you know. My aunts had come here before us. My father started to work. He started work in the Everett Mill. (Y: Yeah) Well part of my father's story is sad you know. Because my father was an engineer on the boats in Italy. Polermo, you know, that's the seashore. But he hurt his back and then he didn't have very good jobs after that. But he come in this country, couldn't speak english, but we got along all right. I don't know if anybody died, or you know, other people. But uh, we didn't get along all right, but there was always food on the table. You try.

Y: How many brothers and sisters?

C: Well we were nine.

Y: Nine all together? With you, ten?

C: No, nine all together.

Y: How many girls?

C: How many living now? There's only me and my sister. Two of us. Everybody has passed away.

Y: Did you have brothers also?

C: Yeah, I had brothers. I had three, four brothers. And we were four brothers. Well we were nine, and five sisters, yeah.

Y: Yeah. Yeah. Can you tell me a little bit about your um, when you were going to elementary school. Do you remember it was long time ago. I mean was stick to your mind from that days?

C: Not too much, because I was always sick. I had contacted Polio when I was small in Italy. You noticed when I limp? I had that since I was a little girl. And I was always sick. And I don't remember too much about school. I only went as far as the fourth grade.

Y: Fourth grade, and then?

C: That's all. In them days, you know, if you didn't have money they put you to work very fast.

Y: Where did you start? Where did you start working?

C: In the woolen mill. I started in the Wood Mill. I was there about two months. There was about a year in the Ayer Mill. And then mostly in the Pacific Mill. Mostly at the Pacific Mill.

Y: Pacific Mill. How long? How many years?

C: Oh, quite a few. We worked on the lower Pacific Mill. You understand what I mean when I saw lower Pacific Mill? Well they had, you know on Canal Street they have all those factories. Well now they have, the Pacific Mill is gone out of Lawrence you know. It's not there anymore you know. But they have mills in other parts of the country. But all that was all Pacific Mill. If you noticed all around there. And we worked in Lower Pacific Mill. That's the oldest place. And then they had built the other part. We worked what they called #10. (Y: Umhm) #10 Mill. You know where that big thing is now, where they make electricity? That big (--) Well the mill behind that, that big mill, that's, that used to be #10 Pacific Mill. (Y: Umhm) And we worked there.

Y: Yeah, what did you do when you started first? Do you remember your first day? Uh, the mill you come in?

C: No, I don't remember my first day, but I was what they called a doffer. And then I went into spinning. (Y: Yeah) Yeah, that's it. And then from there I went to the Monamack. I was there ten years, because that was nearer to my house. And then I went in the shoe shop. And I finished in the shoe shop.

Y: So you walked from Elm Street to Wood Mill at the beginning?

C: Oh yeah, we used to do that.

Y: Everyone was walking.

C: Everybody used to walk.

Y: Yeah, when did you start? Do you remember?

C: They has busses, they had the trolley cars, but we never. What do you mean when did I start?

Y: In the morning, working?

C: I don't remember. We used to start early, and then they put the hours down. I don't remember, because I used to go with my older sister. I used to be half asleep most of the time.

Y: Yeah. And uh, you know, when you walked in I was wondering what stick to your mind from the first impression, you know? Some people say, oh, it was so and it was hot, it was that, it was uh (--)

C: No, no, the mills were not hard in them days. They weren't hard. We used to have a lot of fun, the girls sit down and talk, and laugh, you know? No, it wasn't hard.

Y: Yeah. Some people complain about how loud it was, they couldn't hear, they had trouble hearing the next neighbor. And uh (--)

C: You're suppose to work. You're not suppose to talk. Well the mills are loud. Any kind of machinery makes noise. (Y: Right) You know yourself, any kind of machinery makes noise. They didn't go there to talk, they went there to work.

Y: But there are lots of people who talked, and used to sing, tell jokes. And uh (--)

C: Oh yes! Dance. (Y: Dance and (--)) They go, you know, they used to have big bathrooms, you know, where people go to wash themselves. The, you know, the bathroom. (Y: The ladies room) And there was all young girls, they go there dance, you know. Until the section hand would girl, hey, go back to work. But they used to have fun.

Y: Yeah. Can you tell me more? I'm curious about that part.

C: What part?

Y: I mean what kind of songs did you sing, or what kind of (--) Did you tell jokes for example to each other?

C: No, not in them days jokes. I didn't know what a joke was then.

Y: I mean did you joke about other ethnic groups or something? No?

C: No, no, no.

Y: For example people say uh, we used to call French people frogs. And uh (--)

C: No, no, no, no. We weren't brought up like that. (Y: No?) No.

Y: Yeah. In the other tape you talk about those bathroom, uh, singing and dancing, and uh, did you learn some steps for example, there?

C: Yeah, we learned how to dance the waltz, and (--)

Y: Yeah. Waltz was popular in those days?

C: Well what are you going to dance. You can't do the dances they do now. (Y: Yeah) They just, we were kids and we used to have fun. (Y: Yeah) Yeah. It wasn't that bad. You know, some people are going to complain about anything anyway. They're never satisfied. But I remember we used to have fun. We used to make friends, you know.

Y: Italian friends?

C: So, we had people come from all over. We had a Scottish girl come down one time. They hired a Scottish girl. And you know, they talk, they talk english, but we didn't understand it. We felt bad. She was a nice girl.

Y: But since you went to school a little bit, so you must know a little bit english when you started?

C: Oh yeah.

Y: So you were not like your father?

C: No, not like my father. But you know, my father, we used to eat at home, sit down. We could not speak English at the table. We had to speak Italian. And you know that's good, because now I know Italian. And I can speak good English and good Italian. And that's the best thing. My children don't know any English, uh, any Italian. I feel bad.

Y: How many do you have?

C: Two boys.

Y: Two boys?

C: Yeah. One lives on Andover Street, one lived on Melrose. One boy, the boy in Lawrence, he works for Raytheon. He's been with them thirty years. He's um, well anyway my son in Melrose is a barber. He has his own barber shop. And Arthur is a draftsman. Now the word comes to me. I'm getting old and some words I can't think of it right away. Isn't that awful?

Y: It happens to me too. So um, (C: you?) yeah.

C: But it happens. The other day I couldn't think of the word pension. (Y: pension) And we use pension all the time. Remember I was telling you the shoe shop never had a pension plan?

Y: Well you found it. (C: what?) You found the word later. You remembered the word pension. You found by yourself.

C: Oh yeah, then I remembered. Now I almost forgot draft. My son is in the drafting department. (Y: in Raytheon?) In Raytheon. He's been there thirty years.

Y: What does he do?

C: Draftsman.

Y: I mean what draftman?

C: Print, print uh (--) What?

Y: He prints?

C: Drafts. (Y: yeah) You know, they make blue prints for all the things at Raytheon. And you know, that's a good factory to work for. (Y: Yeah) They have sick, ten days sick, sick leave every year. You know what I mean? And they get paid just the same. And they have a good retirement plan. And everything is very nice there. Too bad I didn't work there when I was young.

Y: Did you have sick days when you were (--) Did they (--) What did you do when you got sick?

C: Stay home, and you don't get paid.

Y: Not at all?

C: No. In the shoe shops, no.

Y: No, not the shoe shops, at the mill?

C: No, never got paid, no. Then they started giving us one week vacation with pay a long time ago. Do ask me when. And then from one week vacation with pay, they gave us two weeks vacation with pay. And that's all I remember.

Y: Yeah. Well they were, I mean these things happened a long time ago.

C: Oh yes, a long time ago.

Y: And uh, so I don't remember what I ate yesterday for lunch. So(--)

C: See! Now I haven't work since 1962. 1962? No, wait a minute. No, let's put it this way. I was sixty-two years old when I retired. But is in in 1962, I can remember that.

Y: Well if you, if you were born 1904, and you were 62, then it means it was '66. 1966 you uh (--)

C: Well I've been retired about, quite awhile now.

Y: Yeah.

C: I'm going to be 84 in November you know. I'm an old lady.

Y: Well you look good though, healthy.

C: Yeah, thank God. God gave me one thing. Yeah, I've been, my health is pretty good. (Y: Yeah) Well I have enough tissues. I'll take some of yours. (Y: Yeah, take more) Thank you. No, I have some more.

Y: You know, I uh (--)

C: See all the tissues I have?

Y: Oh yeah.

C: I have a little cole. (Y: Yeah) That's all I can tell you.

Y: Uh, you know, I'm interested in conditions. When you started, how, how did things change? You know, when you (--)

C: From when?

Y: At the mill, inside? For example, when you started did you have this big belt? (C: Yes) And they were manually, operating them manually, or electric, or it was automatic looms? Or um (--)

C: No, you had to start the machines.

Y: Yeah.

C: I mean you could stop them and you could start them.

Y: Yeah. Can you tell me about the safety? Uh, these machines were safe?

C: You had to be careful.

Y: Why, why be careful? What does it mean?

C: You have to be careful. Well anytime you have machinery that's going, you're not going (--) You know, like some people they would clean while the machines are running. You know, the big gears, you know what I mean, the big gears? Well they don't want you to do that. You have to stop the machines to do that. Some people are too clean you know, and they would get hell from their bosses if they done that, you know? You can clean a machine, the parts that are not moving, but the parts that are moving, they don't want you to touch them when they're moving.

Y: Yeah. Some people told me that you couldn't have long hair, or jewelry, or baggy clothes. Why not?

C: Well when you're near machinery that's moving uh, you're liable to get caught aren't you? (Y: Yeah) Did you hear about the lady that lost all of her hair to the scalp? You didn't? I'm surprised nobody told you that. You were talking to Helen at the [unclear].

Y: Helen mentioned, Helen uh (--)

C: Did she mention anything like that?

Y: She mentioned it, but she didn't want to tell me. She was somehow I don't know, scared. (C: About what) She didn't tell me anything. She said, well uh, you know, yes, yeah. She did not tell me like you are telling me things. I don't know. She was uh (--)

C: Maybe she didn't know?

Y: She said uh, that was lady? What was that [unclear]?

C: Did she work in the mill? (Y: Yeah) Well she must have, she's always been in Lawrence. I don't know if she was born here? But uh, she mustn't have heard about the lady that lost her hair?

Y: In which mill was it?

C: I don't remember.

Y: You don't know.

C: It must have been the Wood Mill I think. I don't know which mill, but I know this lady got her hair cut. A lot of people got hurt in the mills.

Y: Yeah.

C: Yeah, a lot of people got hurt, but you had to be careful. Like you're driving a car. You have to be careful driving a car.

Y: Yeah. (C: well) Yeah. And then uh, later when you work in Pacific 10 you say? (C: Lower Pacific) Lower Pacific #10.

C: That was the best place to work. That was the best.

Y: What did you do there?

C: Spinning. (Y: Spinning) Yeah.

Y: Was it any change when you started, and then later when you quit in the work place? I mean the machines safety, the noise.

C: The same. The same.

Y: There's no change.

C: No. Only thing, you know, as I say, they made them go a little faster. And then they gave you more machines to run. Yeah, that's it, they gave you more machines to run. But we used to do it. We used to do it.

Y: So each time you got a raise, did they expect you to work faster?

C: A little faster, a little more work they give you to do.

Y: How did they make it faster? I mean uh, did they say work fast, or uh (--)

C: They changed the gears. You know what gears are?

Y: Yeah.

C: You have plenty of gears out there. Yeah.

Y: Who did that? The bosses?

C: The companies. No, they had, not the bosses. They had machinists.

Y: Umhm.

C: What else can I tell you?

Y: Well uh (--)

C: I can talk and remember, what I remember.

Y: Don't worry, whatever you tell me is valuable. So don't worry about (--)

C: You think it's valuable what I'm telling you?

Y: Yes, yes. You will see later that it will be. For example, what about the breaks. (C: what?) Did you take breaks while (--)

C: Sure they used to give us breaks. You could sit. Well you know, the work wasn't that hard. And while your work was going and you were hungry you could take a sandwich and eat it. You know what I mean? How long does it take you to take a couple of bites? and your work would be running. And then we'd have an hour at noontime.

Y: What did you do? You went home?

C: No, too much work. We'd bring a lunch with us.

Y: Yeah. And then after five minutes, what did you do?

C: We used to read. We used to have a nap if we felt like having a nap. We were young. We used to do a lot of things. Sit down and talk.

Y: Yeah, I understand you read a lot. So you read a lot.

C: I read a lot.

Y: So uh (--)

C: Even now I read a lot.

Y: In those days what one, what did one read? What kind of stuff?

C: Books. Anything. Newspaper. (Y: Yeah) My brother used to bring home the Boston Post. I don't think they have that paper anymore, the Boston Post. We used to read it.

Y: And um, when you took your sandwich, was it in the ice box at the work, to put so it doesn't get uh.

C: No, they didn't have any ice box.

Y: Or any cool place to put it?

C: No. Usually didn't bring anything that was going to be sour you know? I remember then that later on when we were working in the Pacific Mill, they brought, they put a little warm oven there to warm out things up. I remember that. They had an oven, we used to warm. And before that we could only bring sandwiches and something like that. (Y: Yeah) But then they (--) I remember (--) See now that you're talking I remember they put a little oven. We used to put, bring things in a little pail and put them in there and get it warm.

Y: But you couldn't make it uh, just to warm up, right?

C: Just to warm up. Cook, you couldn't cook.

Y: No cooking, yeah. (C: No) And uh, what kind of sandwiches did you take? (C: What?) What kind of sandwiches? For example, people say, oh the Polish people used to eat that, and the Italian people used to eat that kind of sandwiches, like salami and things. Did you notice what other people around you um (--)

C: No, never noticed.

Y: You didn't share sandwiches with other people?

C: No, I've never been quizzzy. I've never been you know, understand the word quizzzy? (Y: Yeah) I've never been like, even now, where I live. Now I keep mostly by myself. I'm not quizzzy to look and see what other people do. I don't like that.

Y: Yeah. What about the overseer? The section hand? Did you have a good relationship? (C: What?) The section hand? Who was the section hand? What did he do?

C: They were all nice to me. The only one I remember is from Lower Pacific Mill. His name was Ned Armitage. And then his son became a doctor. He was very nice to me. He was Irish. Armitage? English he was. Ned Armitage. I remember him, very nice man. And all the Irish girls used to be jealous, because sometime there wouldn't be enough work and he'd send them home, and he'd give me an extra days work. They used to get mad, because I was Italian and they were, they thought they were going to get more work because they were Irish. I remember that much. [Chuckles]

Y: Did they do such things if the section hand was Irish or Italian, did the section man then said, well these girls who are Irish or Italian should get work, and others go home?

C: No. I don't remember that. He gave me more work. No, they treated us very good. They treated us very good. Of course we done our work.

Y: Yeah. Yeah. And after the unions came in did the section hand change, or was it uh (--)

C: The Pacific Mill never had union. (Y: Never?) No. While I worked there there was no union. In the Wood Mill there was. Wood Mill and them, they turned to union. But the Pacific Mill never had a union.

Y: So no uh, no union.

C: No union in the Pacific Mill.

Y: And people, workers, mostly Italian, or all people?

C: All mixed. All mixed. And we all got along good. Of course there was a few sometimes, you know, you have to meet some that are not so nice. But most everybody got along good.

Y: Yeah. Yeah. And uh, do you know when you started getting social security, or um, health insurance, or things like that?

C: Social Security was 1939 wasn't it? Yeah, I was working then.

Y: Or uh, when you were laid off then did they pay you money after 19, uh (--)

C: Well when the social security came in, then we used to get so much, you know? I remember that. The first time I had to go collect, I was collecting seven dollars a week it was. (Y: Why?) For so many weeks. Because I you know, we hadn't paid that much money in yet. And then it went higher and higher. (Y: Yeah) Yeah, I remember that.

Y: What about health insurance?

C: Blue Cross.

Y: Yeah.

C: Blue Cross, yeah.

Y: Yeah. Well uh, I mean(--)

C: What's that?

Y: That is the screen you saw there in the other room? (C: Yeah) That's from here (--)

side one ends
side two begins.

Y: You don't remember much, but uh, uh, what kind of songs do you know?

C: Well they used to sing that song of the strike song. I forget. That Communist song? I forget what you call it?

Y: Communist, yeah.

C: There was a song that, the Communist sing it too. Maybe that's what they didn't like.

Y: Did they thing they were Communist?

C: I don't think so.

Y: Why do they call it Communist, I mean?

C: I said that. They didn't say that, I said that. [Chuckles]

Y: I thought the Italians were pretty active in that strike? That's what they say.

C: Yeah. That's what, I think that's what changed the, changed Lawrence. Because uh, the Italians started everything. That wasn't the only strike we had you know. You know we had other strikes?

Y: Which ones do you remember?

C: Well the next one I remember, I was working in the Pacific Mill. We were out of work about six months. Three months, six months? We stayed out. We got what we wanted. (Y: Hm) Yeah.

Y: What did you wanted? What did you want?

C: Who remembers now? (Y: Yeah) I think they gave us a raise, another raise that time. We were out quite awhile.

Y: Yeah. I mean how did you survive? Did you have saved money, or um, how did you survive financially when you could not get uh (--)

C: I wasn't married then, I was home. We didn't have much, but we got along. My mother and father always managed. My brother was with (--) Well I had a brother, he used to work in the mill. And then my father wanted him to get into shoe business, because you know, the shoe business was big in Brockton, Haverhill, there wasn't any in Lawrence at that time. So my father sent him someplace to learn to be in the shoe business. And he done good, because then he became a machinist. Yeah, he's dead now. My brother.

Y: What is his name?

C: Paul.

Y: When did you get married?

C: Me? (Y: Yeah) 1926 at the Holy Rosary Church.

Y: How did you meet your husband?

C: Ha, ha, ha! How did the Turkish girls meet their husbands? Between the fathers and the mothers. Hey! [Laughs]

Y: So you did not know him before?

C: No.

Y: Turkish girls don't see their husbands before. They see their husbands at uh (--)

C: Oh no. No. No. No, no, no. We see them, yeah.

Y: You did not go out before you got married?

C: No! Oh my god no!

Y: Movies, dancing?

C: No! Home. Is that the way you do it in Turkey? I don't know, maybe you're more modern now. You're younger than I am.

Y: Well uh, so they arranged the marriage? (C: What?) Your parents?

C: No, we were, nine months we were engaged. And then we had a nice wedding.

Y: In the uh, in the church?

C: Holy Rosary Church. You know where the Holy Rosary Church is, that's us, that's my church.

Y: And your husband's name was what?

C: Michael.

Y: Michael. Italian?

C: Yeah, Simonelli!

Y: Yeah but uh, I mean could you date other, you did not date, did you? In those days did you(-) (C: What?) On those days could you date? Could you go out with guys to the movies and theaters?

C: We could! Everybody did, but not my father. Oh no! (Y: Yeah) Oh no.

Y: What would happen? I mean (--)

C: We never tried, because we, you know, what you don't know, you don't miss. You know what I mean? (Y: Umhm) Yeah, no, my father was very strict. We go to work and come home, and stay home. [Chuckles]

Y: You did not go out with your girlfriends?

C: No, no, no, no. He wouldn't allow that. Well I had sisters. We were a lot of sisters, you know. A lot of cousins. My aunts would come over and that. I mean no, we stayed home. We didn't mind. We'd do embroidery. Crocheting, embroidery. Isn't that the same in your country? Yeah, same thing. Now I play cards, and I go out. If my father knew what I was doing now he'd turn in his grave. [Laughs] My poor father.

Y: So from your marriage you have two sons? (C: Yup) And uh, their names are?

C: Arthur, (Y: Arthur) and Michael.

Y: Uh huh. And can you tell me what other girls did in those days in 19 uh (--) (C: What?) What your friends, although you say you did not do such things, what did other girls do? For example, they say French girls were lose. What does it mean?

C: You know what lose means? [Laughs]

Y: Well what I understand that they went to sleep with guys. Is it so?

C: Well French people are a little different than the Italians. But now everybody is the same I think. Don't you think so? Everybody is the same.

Y: I mean we are talking about those days, you know?

C: Those days. Well they weren't all like that.

Y: Of course not.

C: They're not all like that. But even now, some families are nice and some families are not so good. (Y: Yeah) Sure.

Y: I mean what other nationality, what kind of names did they have. Like they say French girls were lose, Italian girls were strict, or uh, do you remember such uh (--)

C: No. No. There's a lot of things, but you don't remember them. You don't like to talk about people?

Y: Well why not? People make the story. I mean people make the history, so.

C: I know. I know. (Y: Yeah) But don't you think it's nice everybody gets along nice together in this country?

Y: Yeah, was it different than when you started working? People were nicer than now, or right now people are nicer than (--)

C: They were always nice to us, you know?

Y: There's no change back and now?

C: No, you mean did they treat us nice when we went to work? (Y: Yeah) Yeah, we got along with everybody.

Y: So some people say, oh, in those days people were nicer, they were friendlier, they were kinder. Right now it is not so.

C: It's what you make of life. If you're nice, people are nice to you. If you try to be too smart people don't like you. I think the, I think the world has always been the same. You read a lot don't you? Well what they used to, what the ancient smart men used to say is the same today.

Y: Yeah. How old were you when you were married?

C: Twenty-one, twenty-two. Twenty-two.

Y: Twenty-two?

C: Um. I think twenty-two, something like that.

Y: Twenty-two. So uh, twenty-two, twenty-six, I'm thinking of the depression years. You know, trying to find out the years when you got married. And then the depression started uh, (C: '29) twenty-nine.

C: Well I didn't feel the depression. I'll tell you why. Because my husband had a barber shop, and there was always money coming in, and I was working too. We done all right during the depression.

Y: What about other people?

C: Well some of them had it very bad. My father lost his property, because there was, you know, we were all married then. And uh, nobody was paying their rent and my father lost his property. But other people got along all right. Some had it very bad.

Y: Did people help each other when uh, when you saw that your neighbor was in trouble? I mean you, I don't mean personally you. But when people saw that uh, (--)

C: I suppose so. I suppose so.

Y: Yeah.

C: I know that when, I lived in South Lawrence during the depression. There was a French family that lived downstairs. They couldn't find a job. They were pretty bad off. Very bad off, you know? Couldn't get, the shoe shops were not working, the mills were not working. It was very bad for those people. I remember the people downstairs. (Y: Umhm) Yeah. Yeah, that's

the only one I remember, because they lived downstairs. But other people, my family got along all right. And my father lost his property. What you going to do?

Y: How did it happen?

C: What?

Y: How did it happen?

C: Well nobody was paying rents. They had to pay the mortgage and things. They had no money coming in. By that time we were all married, you know? We couldn't help them. We had enough for ourselves, but we couldn't. So that's what happened.

Y: Umhm. Do you remember anything about uh, Mutual Benefits Societies? (C: No) I heard that they helped when people got sick. You did not have any such (--)

C: Oh maybe it was the different clubs? Maybe they had. No, I don't remember anything about that. But uh, you know, there's a lot of clubs in Lawrence. They had French clubs, Italian clubs, maybe that's what they mean. (Y: Umhm) Is that what they mean?

Y: Well I don't know. I heard that there were um, Mutual Benefit Societies. They could pay up to \$500.00 if someone got sick. And they paid if someone died.

C: You must, they had to be paying into those things. (Y: Yeah) No, I don't now anything about that.

Y: You did not belong to any clubs?

C: No, no, no.

Y: Your husband, or uh (--)

C: No.

Y: How did you get together with Italian people?

C: How do they get together?

Y: I mean you. Did you have together picnics, parties? Didn't you visit each other? Didn't you uh (--)

C: No, we didn't belong to any clubs, or anything like that. Just the families, you know? (Y: Umhm) Just my family that's all.

Y: When is your second son was born, because I want to ask another question. When was his birth?

C: Uh, my first son was 19, wait a minute, 1928. (Y: 1928?) I was married in '26, '28. And then my other son was born four years later.

Y: '20, uh, '32,

C: '32 my Arthur was born.

Y: Did you work after the birth, or did you stay home?

C: I stayed home awhile, and then I went back to work. I was always lucky, there was always somebody living in the same apart (--) building with me that could take care of my children. I was lucky.

Y: Did you pay money, or just (--)

C: Yeah, you have to pay some. But it was hardly anything in them days. Not like now. Now anybody wants a baby-sit you got to pay too much money.

Y: Umhm. '32. I was thinking of the World War II. You know, how uh, did you notice that in the mill that that was a (--) I mean obviously you know that there was a war, but did people notice that there was a war going on and do you remember anything related to (--)

C: Yes I do. My sisters boys, they were older than mine, of course my sister. And uh, three of her boys went, had to go. And two of them were wounded in the war. And my sister felt very bad. The fourth one couldn't go because he had something wrong with his ear. And he felt very bad. He wanted to go. Oh yeah, I remember those years. I felt bad for my sister.

Y: Yeah. Did it change anything in the mill? I mean did you work more, or did you uh (--)

C: Well there was more woolen. You know, the kacky. You know that color kacky they used to wear the uniforms, kacky color? (Y: Umhm) Soldiers [unclear]. But there was more of that wool going through. (Y: In your) A lot of government. Yeah. I remember that. That's all I remember about.

Y: Did they pay more, or the same? Do you remember?

C: I think they used to pay a little bit more for that woolen, for that wool. I don't remember too much.

Y: Do you know anything about the three sons who went to war and died?

C: The [Campanion?] boys.

Y: Campanion boys. What do you know about that?

C: Nothing. All I know is what I read in the paper.

Y: You don't know the family?

C: No. (Y: Umhm) No. Three of them died, huh? Three or four?

Y: Three.

C: Yeah, they named the common after the boys, which is a nice thing. (Y: Umhm) Yeah. I think they used to live on Elm Street, that family? Elm Street. It's all I hear what I see in the paper, you know?

Y: But it's your street, you should know them? (C: What?) That was your street, Elm Street?

C: Oh we only lived there a little while, (Y: where did you go?) but down this end of Elm Street, see? All these people lived down the other end. Did they live on Elm Street, the Companions?

Y: That's what I remember, but maybe I'm wrong.

C: Well you know all that neighborhood was all Italians. Oak Street, Elm Street, Chestnut Street, those were all Italians. And Armenians, and I suppose a few Turkish. We have, how many nationalities have we got in Lawrence?

Y: A lot. Forty.

C: Forty. See, you know more than me. I know there's a lot. That's a good gathering of people huh? Forty. Boy that's a lot.

Y: Yeah. And so you don't remember anything, how the World War II, I mean besides your sister. She was uh, she was sad huh?

C: Oh yeah. Well you know, you have three lovely boys at home and they go. And you know what was going on. They were, two of them were in Germany. The other one I don't know. It was a sad, very sad.

Y: You know what I'm curious about is (--)

C: Nothing happy about that.

Y: Yeah. What I'm curious about, did people who worked in the mills, did they know that there was a you know, war was going on? Did they notice that you know, Hitler was marching in the Poland? Did they notice (--)

C: They must have known. (Y: I mean you know because you (--)) They must have known, because they all had families. They all had families. They must have known. They all read newspapers. (Y: Umhm) You know. Of course they must have known. A lot of them had

children in the war. Sure.

Y: I guess I'm curious how uh, how those things affected the work, you know.

C: I don't remember that. You know, when you have to work, you work. That wouldn't affect the work.

Y: Did you feel kind of proud or so when, in those days when you were producing that cally you said?

C: The what?

Y: What kind of uh (--)

C: Kacky! (Y: Kacky?) Kacky.

Y: Did you feel kind of (--) Some people say, oh we were so proud and we (--)

C: No, why should you be proud. It was good work you know, because it was good wool. And we didn't have much trouble with it. I remember that. But why feel proud about something like that? You don't think of those things.

Y: So you did not have any loyal feelings towards the company? You know, not such uh (--)

C: No, you don't remember those things. We just worked. And come home and worked some more. When you're raising children it's not funny.

Y: Did your husband help you with household things?

C: Yeah. I had a good husband. I had a very good husband. [phone rings]

Y: I read that there was a flood in Lawrence.

C: Yes, it was very bad.

Y: When was that?

C: Who remembers? [Chuckles] I don't remember dates. (Y: Yeah) all you have to do is get some of the old newspapers, you'll find out it was very bad.

Y: Well um, I know when (--) (C: You heard about it?) Well I know when it was. You're second (--)

C: I was living in South Lawrence, and I went to work that morning. I was a nut, because I didn't turn on the radio and I didn't listen, because they said all the mills were closed. I walked over the bridge and I was afraid, from South Lawrence to go to, I was working at #10 at the time.

And the water was way up almost to the bridge. You know, when the water is that high, you're looking there and you don't like it very much. And I got there and there was no work. And I had to walk all the way home again. Oooh! I really was shaking that time. And then in the afternoon I was listening to the radio at home. And they were saying how high the water was coming. So I took the children and we went down from South Lawrence, and we went to the bridge. And you know where the canal is? And you know the river? You couldn't tell where the river and the canal was separated. You know they're separated. You know the two of them were together. The river was as high as the canal. And the water (--)

Y: You mean the dam?

C: The dam. You know the canal?

Y: Yeah, the dam is uh, it goes down like that.

C: Yeah, but you couldn't see the dam! (Y: Wow!) No dam! And the canal, it came right over to the canal. They were, the river and the canal were together like this, and the water was on the streets. And it was beginning to climb up. Because I remember we couldn't go all the way down. And then by 6:00 at night it was very bad. My husband went down to look. We didn't stay that long. You know, it's not a very pretty thing to see. You don't, you get kind of nervous. And uh, my husband went down about 6:00, he wanted to get down to see his mother, but he couldn't, couldn't cross no place. And uh, I think about six, that night it started going down, but it was very bad. A lot of damage. A lot of damage.

Y: Damage where? In the mills?

C: The mills were all flooded, the cellars, you know. And they have a lot of things. The stores on Essex Street were all flooded. Essex Street was flooded too. Well it's not far from them. It was very bad that flood.

Y: Yeah. Do you remember how old your children were?

C: Yeah, they were quite small. They were going to school at that time. Six, seven, eight, I don't know. Something like that.

Y: Yeah, you remember right. (C: What?) You remember correctly, because the flood was in 1936.

C: Is that what it was, 1936?

Y: And your second child must have been four years old, and the other one eight years old.

C: Quite young, I know they were young. We walked down together. Yeah. Very bad. We've had some bad storms and some bad things. Well they have (--) But you know the New England weather is better than the rest of the country. Did you find that out? We have the best weather here than any part of the United States. We don't get earthquakes, we don't get tornadoes, we

don't get too many hurricanes.

Y: You did get in the past, hurricanes.

C: Yeah. Yeah. Well unusual.

Y: Yeah, do you remember that hurricane?

C: I remember that. I was working in the Everett Mill building that day. Woe! And we were living in South Lawrence. That's where my son lives now. And three or four of our trees, but the time I got home three or four of our trees in the yard were down. But we didn't lose our roof. [Chuckles]

Y: Anybody hurt?

C: My family? No.

Y: No, I mean uh (--)

C: Other people, I don't remember about other people. I don't, I don't think anybody was hurt.

Y: Yeah. Was the river a threat like uh, you know, in your back mind was the river, Merrimack River, it wasn't the first time, the 1936 flood was not the first time. It was uh, it happened before I thought.

C: I don't know. The first time (--)

Y: Or later uh, (C: when?) well it is not, I don't remember the date, but they say the 1936 flood was not the first and last time.

C: Oh.

Y: So it wasn't?

C: Well that was the worst one. That's the one I remember.

Y: Yeah. And uh, are you tired? We can stop. (C: What?) Are you tired? You seem not to want to talk, or uh, we can stop you know. It is uh (--)

C: Oh, I'm not tired. If you want to talk, we talk.

Y: Well I mean I am interested what you say, but uh (--)

C: Yeah? I don't think it's very interesting.

Y: That's what you think.

C: I don't think it's very interesting. [Chuckles]

Y: You know, I have here before you came I prepared hundreds of questions for you. For example, what about vending machines? When did you, when could you get a coke?

C: We didn't have (--) Is this, those are the questions? Where?

Y: Well they're (--) I ask you. Do you want to see them?

C: Yeah. The vending machine? We didn't have no vending machines.

Y: I mean these are questions you know, to remind me what kind of questions I am going to ask you. There are hundreds of them. So that's why I asked if you are tired. We can stop.

C: Yeah, I am tired. But no, keep going. I'd like to know about the vending machine. (Y: Okay. Okay, uh) We didn't have no vending machines in the mills in them days. Maybe they have them now. Now they have.

Y: What did you do when you got thirsty?

C: Drink water.

Y: Cold nice water?

C: Yeah, they had faucets.

Y: Uh huh. And what about if you were laid off? How did they do that? Could they do that(--) Did they notify you before, or uh, what?

C: Well maybe they'd notify you a day before. That's about it. If there wasn't much work they have to lay so many off. Maybe say, you know, take a day off and come back, they tell you when to come back. Let's say they lay you off on a Thursday, come back Monday. And then they lay some more off. They didn't lay everybody off at once. Give everybody a chance to work.

Y: But they did not pay for those days?

C: No. No. No, no, no, no, not in them days. Now the Raytheon, they pay. But Raytheon is very good, they work all the time.

Y: Umhm. What did you do with your children and husband? Did you travel for example around? Did you take trips here and there? What did you do on weekends? Anything you remember?

C: Stay home and clean the house.

Y: That's not what you did all the time. You must uh, there was some fun.

C: When you work and you have to(--) Oh yeah, we went on a lot of trips. And when we retired we went on a lot of trips.

Y: Can you tell me a little bit about Essex Street, where you live now? I mean if you go back when you were sixteen, eighteen, what is different than today? How was it in those days?

C: Well there used to be a lot of people on Essex Street. Now you don't see nobody. On Saturdays it used to be full of people, because there were no malls in them days. You know, now everybody goes to the mall. But everybody had to shop on Essex Street. And Saturdays was beautiful. There was more people on Essex Street.

Y: What about the movie theaters? Were there more (C: what?), movie theaters? You know, movies?

C: You mean movies, pictures?

Y: Yeah, where you saw the movie. A movie theater. You know? (C: Oh, oh. Oh yeah) Didn't you go to movies at all?

C: Oh yeah, once in awhile. Yeah. You know how many movie picture houses they had in Lawrence at that time? Nobody told you? You know where Broadway is? (Y: Yeah) Well there was four of them one after another, and one across the street. And then there was one on, that was five. Then there was one on Essex Street. One on Newbury Street. They were all over the place. Now, now you have to go to the cinema in North Andover. What is it, Andover, Lawrence, the cinema? (Y: Umhm) I don't know. Well, what else do you want to know? I have to go home and wash you know?

Y: I can come and help you.

C: [Laughs] The washing machine does it. (Y: Yeah) Yeah, the washing machine does it.

Y: Anyway uh, there are lots of questions, but you seem not to uh,(--)

C: I'm getting tired.

Y: Yeah, you are getting tired. So therefore maybe we'll stop and uh (--)

C: What else, what else could you ask me?

Y: I could ask you other questions?

C: You were trained for that, huh?

Y: Well that is my profession.

C: I know!

Y: For example, uh (--)

C: What else could you ask me?

Y: Yeah, do you remember the Korean War? The war in the Korea?

C: Yeah, but it didn't bother me anyway. You know, no of us were involved in it. Just what we used to read in the paper. No, I don't remember about the Korean War. There's a lot of things I forget nowadays.

Y: Well that was thirty seven years ago.

C: I know, it's not too long ago, is it?

Y: Well it is. Thirty-seven years.

C: Thirty-seven?

Y: Yeah.

C: Wow, that long?

Y: 1950.

C: See how time flies?

Y: What about the Hiroshima?

C: Oh that was bad, huh?

Y: How did you find out first? Do you remember?

C: The paper.

Y: The paper? (C: Paper) When uh, um, (--)

C: You know you don't like to hear those things. Nobody does. Nobody does.

Y: Yeah. Uh, as I said, you know, I'm interested in how things changed in six decades, 1920 and 80. And how those things, like uh, Hiroshima and World War II, and this kind of thing affect, affected people at work, at home (--)

C: Those things, I can't tell you anything about them. Maybe the men can tell you more about those things.

Y: What about the ice box for example? Did you have the ice box when you were a little girl?

C: Yeah, ice box, yeah. And then we come to refrigerators. Now everybody has the, what do they call the ovens now?

Y: Microwave.

C: Now everybody's got a microwave. (Y: Umhm) Life goes on, and everything gets bigger and bigger.

Y: No story about the ice box? I mean uh, when did you have the refrigerator? Did you have all the time ice box, or at some point do you got a refrigerator?

C: We had the ice box, and when the ice box broke down we got the refrigerator.

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